WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
801-809 G ST., N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

No. 6.

FULL LIMIT OF BUREAUCRACY

Postoffice Department Official Reveals Arbitrary Methods Employed in the Service.

NATURAL RIGHTS ABRIDGED

Second Assistant Postmaster General Stewart Declares Employes Have Been Dismissed Solely Because They Were Members of a Postal Employes' Union.

Washington, May 13.—The attitude of the postoffice department officials is now a matter of record with reference to the right of the employes of the postal service to organize for mutual protection. While it has been known that the department has been exceedingly active in its hostility, yet it was hardly conceived that the chief officials would assume that because an individual entered the postal service he thereby relinquished his rights as a citizen, guaranteed to him under the first amendment to the constitution of the United States.

Second Assistant Postmaster General Stewart, in testifying before the house committee on Civil Service Reform, admitted that employes in the service had been dismissed because they were too active in promoting a union of postal clerks, notwithstanding the fact that they were highly efficient. His exact words were as follows:

"They were discharged because of their pernicious activity in promoting this new union organization. The organization had headquarters in St. Paul, and I believe they were officials of the proposed union. Otherwise they were efficient men. The only reason for their dismissal was their activity in the face of the plain order of the postmaster general and other department officials which they persistently violated. It was a plain case of insubordination."

Oscar F. Nelson, President of the National Federation of Postoffice Clerks, followed Mr. Stewart before the committee. He detailed to the committee the manner in which he had been dismissed from the service, the only apparent reason being that he was an official in the union organization.

Intense interest is being manifested by a large number of congressmen, who are in daily attendance at the committee hearings. A significant fact is that the National Association of Manufacturers have requested to be heard, and queries are being circulated to ascertain what

interest this union busting combination has in the controversy, and whether there is some combination between the department officials and this well known aggregation.

In the face of determined opposition by the postoffice department against the employes joining or forming unions, increases in membership and organization of new unions are continued. The arbitrary action of the officials has caused and is causing a cumulative restive spirit among them owing to the uncertainty existing as to what new plan of persecution may be put into operation at any time.

Several more hearings are in prospect, and it will probably be two weeks before testimony will all be in and the committee given an opportunity to take action on the bill before it.

CHARTER ISSUED

Western Federation of Miners Granted Full Affiliation with the American Federation of Labor.

Washington, May 13.--President Moyer of the Western Federation of Miners, under date of May 6, notified President Gompers that canvass of the referendum vote overwhelmingly endorsed the proposition to accept the charter upon the conditions laid down by the executive council of the American Federation of Labor at its meeting January 16-27. On May 9 the charter was issued.

SHORTER HOURS FOR WOMEN

Washington, May 13.--Secretary Bates of the New York State Federation reports that the 54-hour bill for women and children passed the lower house of the legislature on May 2, the vote being 86 ayes and 36 against. Opinion prevails that this measure will reach the governor. Efforts have been made during the last twelve years to secure the enactment of this law.

COMMERCIAL TELEGRAPHERS

Employes of the Western Union Telegraph Company to Go to an Eight-Hour Day with Increased Pay.

Washington, May 13.--Information seemingly authentic states that the key men in the employ of the Western Union will be granted an eight hour day on the first of June, together with a substantial increase in wages. As near as can be learned the increase amounts from 5 to 15 per cent. The most pleasing feature, however, is the announcement that President Vail of the company has gone on record as being opposed to any discrimination against telegrapghers who belong to a union.

One hundred and twenty-nine postal savings depositories have been established since the inauguration by the postoffice department of this system authorized by Congress. Reports to the department justify the assertion that the new departure is an unqualified success.

At Taylorville, Ill., carpenters increased their scale of wages from 40 to 50 cents per hour and reduced hours from nine to eight.

According to the Labor Gazette issued by the department of labor in Canada employment is on the increase and scales of wages in many crafts are increasing.

TAKE YOUR CHOICE

Ex-President Roosevelt in Outlook Expresses Himself and Mr. Bryan in the Commoner Does Likewise.

Washington, May 13.--In a late issue of the Outlook, Theodore Roosevelt, after a few prefatory observations, continues:

* * * "In exactly the same spirit I state the convictions of The Outlook in expressing its hearty reprobation of the conduct of those labor leaders who, without waiting to know anything of the facts of the case, have at once flown publicly to the defense of the alleged dynamiters whom Mr. Burns has now arrested, and who talk about the arrest as being part of a conspiracy against labor unions.

"No worse service can be rendered by labor union leaders to the cause of unionism than that which they render when they seek to identify the cause of unionism with the cause of any man guilty of a murderous attack of this nature. I have no idea whether the men arrested on Mr. Burns' statement are or are not guilty; the labor leaders in question have no idea whether or not they are. They are entitled to an absolutely fair trial. If they have no money to provide counsel for themselves, then it would be entirely proper for any body of men to furnish them the requisite funds, simply as an incident in securing them a fair trial. But it is grossly improper to try to create a public opinion in favor of the arrested men simply because the crime of which they are accused is one committed against a capitalist or a corporation, and because the men who are charged with committing it are members of a labor union." * * *

William J. Bryan, in an editorial, has this to say:

"The country will suspend judgment while the courts deal with the charges against the labor leaders - McNamara, McNamara and McManigal. The crime committed was a most heinous one - too horrible to impute to anyone without positive proof. No punishment is too severe for men who resort to such crimes, but the public will sympathize with the members of the unions in assuming the accused innocent until they are shown to be guilty, and in condemning the resort to kidnapping of the accused. If the evidence should show the accused really guilty the unions will be as quick to condemn them as the outside world will be, for organized labor has no greater enemy than the man who resorts to violence."

FLORIDA LEGISLATURE

Washington, May 13.--The legislature now in session in Florida has defeated a child labor bill, but there are two other bills of interest that apparently have a good chance of passage. One is to reduce the price of school text books and a liability bill.

Department store chauffeurs of Providence, R. I., have secured an increase of $2 per week.

The Laborers' union at Berlin, Ont., secured an increase of 2 cents per hour.

ENGLISH DELEGATE

Musicians of Great Britain Send Representative to Convention American Federation of Musicians.

Washington, May 13.--The organized musicians of the United Kingdom have sent a representative to attend the convention of the American Federation of Musicians now in session at Atlanta, Ga. The gentleman thus honored is J. B. Williams, who is secretary of the general organization of musicians. Mr. Williams made a visit to Washington prior to his departure for Atlanta, primarily to renew his acquaintance with President Gompers, and also to view the national capital. Mr. Williams is a prominent member of the Labor Party of England, and is a member of the Parliamentary Committee. He claims to be a Socialist, but is opposed and has voted against the Labor Party endorsing the Socialist program, which he says, precludes any progress whatever, The Liberal Party at the present time is advocating numerous changes with which the Labor Party is in accord, and Mr. Williams is emphatic in his expression of the belief that trade unionists should also be opportunists, of which he is a pronounced type. The visit of the delegate from the English musicians is not only fraternal, but with a view to forming a mutual alliance on trade matters with the American Musicians.

STEEL TRUST EXPANDING

Shipbuilding Plants Being Taken Under Control of the United States Steel Corporation.

Washington, May 13.--To make a complete monopoly is the end sought to be attained by the gigantic steel combination. Recently the Risdon Iron Works of San Francisco was taken over, and now the representatives of the trust are negotiating for the purchase of the Moran Shipbuilding plant at Seattle. The steel trust is bitterly opposed to union labor. The Risdon company now employs union men, while the Moran Company does not.

KEY MEN REORGANIZE

Washington, May 13.--After four years of inactivity the commercial telegraphers of this city have reorganized local 24, with a strong membership list. This organization went out of existence during the national strike of some years ago.

STRANGE INDEED

Washington, May 13.--It has been stated recently that the National Association of Manufacturers are to inaugurate a campaign with the end in view of affording relief to injured workmen and to minimize the number of industrial accidents, which now are placed at 1,000,000 annually. Evidently the union busting concern's leaders have been compelled to take another route to bolster up their nefarious and inhuman policy of stripping men who labor of every right which is guaranteed to them under the laws of our country. The latest move is a joke.

STRIKE OF UNORGANIZED

Slavs Quit Work in Edged Tool Plant of the Collins Company at Collinsville, Conn.

Washington, May 13.--At Collinsville, Conn., there is in progress a strike of unorganized Slavs in the establishment of the Collins Company, manufacturers of edged tools. The company is an old one, and recently a new style of ax was introduced, in the making of which the grinders were virtually reduced in pay by the added work on it. This caused dissatisfaction and a number of the employes quit, followed by others. The Slavs are the seventh nationality employed by the firm, the employers in turn having displaced Yankees with Irish, then Irish with Germans, then French, then Dutch, then Swedish, then Finns, and finally the Slavs.

ANOTHER VICTORY FOR PRINTERS

De Vinne Press of New York City Enters Into Agreement With Typographical Union.

Washington, May 13.--One of the oldest and best known book and job printing establishments in the country, the De Vinne Press of New York City, will here after conduct its composing room as a strictly union department. James M. Lynch, President of the International Typographical Union, has just notified Secretary Morrison of the American Federation of Labor of this important accession. Through the efforts of President Lynch, and President Tole of No. 6 this desirable result has been attained. Beside other important and large contracts for printing held by the De Vinne Press, the Century Magazine and St. Nicholas is gotten out. Taken together with the recent settlement secured with the Butterick Publishing Company the New York Typographical Union is indeed to be congratulated.

Tailors of Logansport, Ind., have secured increase.

At Pittsburg, Kansas, carpenters secured an increase in wages from 37½ to 42½ cents per hour.

Carpenters at Vicksburg, Miss., successfully withstood the effort to reduce wages, and are again at work at the union scale.

Electricians of White Plains, N. Y., have just secured a raise in wages of 25 cents per day.

Printers at Grand Forks, N. D., secured an increase of $1.50 per week, and the pressmen obtained same increase.

At Lorain, O., stationary engineers secured an increase in the municipal water plant of $5 per month.

At Reading, Pa., brewery workers got increase of $1 per week. Engineers and firemen also secured $1 increase and eight-hour day.

The painters of Troy, N. Y., after a five weeks' strike, secured an increase of 20 cents per day.

SILK MILL STRIKE WON

Unorganized Employes Cease Work on Account of Intolerable Conditions Imposed.

Washington, May 13.--Information has just been received that the employes of the Eagle Silk Mill at Shamokin, Pa., after being on strike since April 10, have reached a satisfactory adjustment of their grievances and returned to work. The employes of this concern were not members of a union when they ceased work, but the conditions under which they worked became so aggravated that all the employes quit their employment. They were organized after they had been out for a time. The cause of the trouble was the "docking" system in vogue in the mill. It is stated that fines were imposed for the most trivial causes, such as looking out of the window, talking during working hours, laughing, absence from work, tardiness, etc. The agreement reached provides that all grievances hereafter, which cannot be settled by the employes and management, will be referred to an arbitration committee. The adjustment is considered a great victory for the employes. The organization will be permanent and improved conditions are bound to come.

JUGGLING LEGISLATION

Senator Judson of Connecticut Legislature Alleged to Be Closely Allied with Union Busters.

Washington, May 13.--A story comes from Hartford, Conn., that Senator Judson of the state legislature, and chairman of the judiciary committee, has been openly charged with being unfair and biased by organizer Reid of the American Federation of Labor. It is stated that at a hearing before the Judiciary Committee Organizer Reid appeared a second time, but before he had been given sufficient time to conclude his statements in regard to the trades dispute act the chairman asked him to give way because he had spoken at a former hearing. A charge was then made by Reid that the chairman was unfair, for at the same hearing an attorney for the manufacturers' association was given a hearing, although he had appeared before the committee before, as had Reid. Open accusations have been made of the unfairness of Senator Judson and suggestions made that efforts be inaugurated to retire Senator Judson to private life. The Senate, upon this turn of events, immediately passed a vote of confidence in the judiciary chairman. No doubt the unionists of Connecticut will not forget this instance when Senator Judson again asks for the suffrages of his district.

Cements Workers have just organized in Medford, Ore., and Delta, Colo.

Electrical Workers and Painters of Bakersfield, Cal., have secured an increase of 50 cents per day.

The Lathers of St. Charles, Ill., Macon, Ga., Hinsdale, Ill., and Twin Falls, Idaho, have recently formed local unions.

Stove Mounters have secured increases in several localities.

Twelve unions of Journeymen Tailors have secured an increase of 10 per cent, and a new local organized in Bridgeport, Conn.

ORGANIZING TEXTILE WORKERS

Textile Mill Employes with American Training Gradually Decreasing in Number.

Washington, May 13.--A letter just received by Secretary Morrison contains information relative to the organizing of textile workers in Utica, N. Y. An excerpt follows:

"In the last quarter we have organized over 1,000 textile workers in Utica alone, Most of the members are Poles. It is a remarkable fact that employes in the textile mills having an American training are becoming fewer each year--they are being gradually displaced by Poles, Italians and Greeks. The employers usually have two, if not more, nationalities employed, and generally manage to engender more or less national dislike between them. I find that among the Poles, or rather their priests and leaders, there is no oppesition to the organized labor movement, but there is a determined effort to retain their national customs, religion and language, and to obtain political recognition. In other words, they do not want to become assimilated, but to form their own colonies."

The first eight-hour day ever granted by a railway corporation to its mechanical department employes was conceded by the Denver & Rio Grande Railway recently.

The machinists in the contract shops of Memphis, Tenn., have secured an increase of 3 cents per hour.

The Iowa Central Railway has just signed an agreement with the machinists and other federated shop mechanics which carries an increase of 1½ cents per hour.

At Baltimore, Md., the machinists have just executed an agreement with the Crown Cork and Seal Company calling for a 25 cents per day increase.

Carpenters of Bakersfield, Cal., secured an agreement without friction increasing their wages from $4 to $4.50 per day.

Painters and Cement Workers of Sacramento, Cal., have obtained increase of 50 cents per day without strike.

Garment Workers of Alton, Ill., recently organized and secured eight-hour day and standard wage scale.

Stonemasons and Painters of Kankakee, Ill., have secured an increase in wages,

At Rock Island, Ill., the painters secured 7 cents per hour increase, carpenters 5 cents per hour; bricklayers, 10 cents per hour; plumbers obtained Saturday half holiday, and the hoisting engineers secured increase of 16 cents per hour and eight-hour day.

Stove Molders at Spring City, Pa., obtained increase of 5 percent.

SUPREME COURT TO ADJOURN

Highest Judicial Tribunal Has Two More Decision Days Remaining And Then Will Close for Summer.

Washington, May 13.—The Supreme Court of the United States will convene only twice before the summer adjournment. Interest has been centered each convening day with the expectation that the decision would be reached in the cases of President Gompers, Secretary Morrison and Vice-President Mitchell of the American Federation of Labor. In fact, it has not been considered probable that the court would adjourn for its summer vacation without handing down a decision. The two decision days are May 15 and 29, and upon the latter date the Court adjourns until the October term.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM COMMITTEE

Personnel of the Committee Before Which Hearings Are Being Held Relative to Railway Mail Clerks.

Washington, May 13.—It will be of intertest to those interested in the investigation now going on before the Committee on Civil Service Reform regarding the attitude of the Postoffice Department toward the employes of the railway mail service. The members are as follows:

Hannibal L. Godwin, Chairman, Sixth North Carolina district.
David E. Finley, Fifth South Carolina district.
Arsene P. Pujo, Seventh Louisiana district.
Charles D. Carter, Fourth Oklahoma district.
Martin Dies, Second Texas district.
John Boehne, First Indiana district.
H. Garland Dupre, Second Louisiana district.
Charles A. Talcott, Twenty-seventh New York district.
Frederick H. Gillett, Second Massachusetts district.
I. D. Young, Sixth Kansas district.
William Kent, Second California district.
Solomon F. Prouty, Seventh Iowa district.

The first eight members are Democrats, while the latter four are Republicans.

TO ELECT SENATORS DIRECT

Already Passed House and Judiciary Committee of Senate Favorably Reports It to That Body.

Washington, May 13.—After a long and consistent and persistent struggle the Congress of the United States is about to gratify the overwhelming desire of the people to elect their United States Senators by a direct vote of the people themselves. The measure has passed the House by a vote of 296 to 16. The Senate Judiciary Committee, to which was referred the joint resolution from the House, immediately upon its organization submitted a favorable report and it has been placed on the calendar and will be taken up in its regular order, which will probably be within a short time.

New unions of Brick, Tile and Terra Cotta Workers have been organized at Kingston, N. Y., and Oakland, Cal.

EXODUS FROM SCOTLAND

Rapid Depletion of Population Creates Anxiety for the Future Welfare of the Land O' Oakes.

Washington, May 13.—Much apprehension is felt in Scotland on account of the continued exodus of people from that historic land. During 1910 79,789 Scots left their native shores, comprising vigorous young men between the ages of twenty and thirty. For the first four months of the present year over 4,000 booked passages through shipping agents at Aberdeen alone. The attendant results are beginning to be severely felt by the remaining population. It is stated that at Fetterangus one-tenth of the population averages nearly eighty years of age, while at Keig not a single child attends school from twenty-five of the largest holdings. In some parishes only those who are too old or too young to emigrate are left.

PARCELS POST

This Question Will be Dealt With by the Present Congress and Its Success in the House Assured.

Washington, May 13.—Sentiment in the entire country has so far crystallized as to make the parcels post problem a live one. There is and has been for years an ever growing feeling that the government should enter and control the field now occupied by the express companies, owing largely to the fact that exorbitant rates are charged by these companies, together with the knowledge that enormous dividends are annually declared. Added to this it is also argued that the express companies are carefully protected by the United States Postal Laws, whereas the government should be permitted to hold a complete monopoly over the business which is now done by the express companies.

NEW MINES BILL

Winston Churchill Introduces Remedial Measure in Parliament Which Meets Approval.

Washington, May 13.—From foreign sources it is learned that great hopes are entertained among the miners that the new mines bill to be taken up by the English Parliament will have a far reaching effect. Several suggestions will be made and presentations have already been made to the home secretary. The first of these is that there should be a limitation as to the number of persons in charge of one manager, for it is argued that it is out of all reason for one manager to be in full control of from four to eight collieries. The effort of the miners to abolish unskilled labor has not been successful, but it is hoped the new act will have this effect.

An animated conference of the National Union of Teachers was held recently at Aberystwith, Great Britain, over the issuance by the board of education of a secret circular The document suggested that "as elementary teachers were uncultured that only graduates of Oxford or Cambridge should be selected as inspectors " The secretary of the board has admitted his "error of judgment" in permitting the circular to issue. It is believed the error of judgment was the result of the publication of the "secret circular."

RAILWAY SERVANTS' SOCIETY

Annual Report of Railway Organization of Great Britain Shows Steady Progress.

Washington, May 13.--The Thirty-ninth annual report of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants has just been issued, and it shows that the total membership of the society is 75,153, an increase over last year of 1,582. The year's gross receipts was $457,000, while expenditures amounted to $398,000. The legal expenses of the organization was over $75,000, but the suspension and out of work benefits only amounted to $41,000. During the last eleven years the society's funds have doubled in amount. The assets of the society, consisting of different interest paying investments, amounts to $2,205,000. This showing ought to interest every union man in America, which shows investment assets of the English society that reaches approximately £30 per capita.

SEAMEN DETERMINED

All Parts of Europe Is Represented by Delegates to International Conference in London.

Washington, May 13.--The Seamen's and Firemen's union of Europe have delegates in attendance at the International Conference now being held in London. Reports state that the delegates are in a fighting mood, and demand the establishment of a board of conciliation so that their representatives may meet the representatives of the owners to adjust grievances. The owners have thus far flatly refused. Their main object is to attack the shipping federation, which is described as a huge octopus, whose tentacles clench in a vice-like grip every department of the shipping industry and every detail of a sailor's life. The shipping concern is an international organization controlling huge argosies and boasting of $100,000,000 in money. The sailors are determined to have the conciliation board; they mean to get on an equal footing with the miner, ironworker and cotton operatives. If these measures cannot be obtained peacefully the indications point to a world-wide cessation of work until their rights are recognized.

MEN RETURN TO WORK

Steel Plant at Birmingham, Ala., Resumes Operation After Failing in Its Bluff.

Washington, May 13.--Simultaneous with the discussion on the floor of the House of Representatives on the Reciprocity treaty telegrams were received by Mr. Underwood, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, also in charge of the matter on the floor, from steel trust officials advising him to vote against the measure he was advocating. To emphasize the telegraphic advices the steel works at Birmingham laid off 3,000 men. It was charged that this was an old trick of the big monopoly to compel obedience to their edicts. Mr. Underwood represents the Birmingham district in Congress, but refused to comply with the advice of the steel corporation and voted for the bill, which passed the House by a large majority. Since then labored explanations have been issuing from the headquarters of the steel trust, claiming that the Birmingham officials had misunderstood orders, but the men have been again returned to work.